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Discontinuity in changing from one status or role to another lessens with knowledge of the new role (gained through observation or indirect sources such as a counselor) and acquisition of its behavioral characteristics prior to formalization of the change (anticipatory socialization). This theory presumes that the image or role expectation upon which anticipatory socialization is based is accurate. In professional roles such as nursing or teaching, however, conflicting images exist: the professional image, which accurately indicates role duties; and the public, which reflects the dramatic and sterotypic role aspects and may also be outdated. A study of teacher interns revealed that those who made the most successful transition from student to teacher entered the intern program with the clearest and most accurate image of the teacher, based on teachers whom they knew personally as well as professionally. Research on socialization for change is needed as it relates to educational and sociological problems such as urban and vocational education. (LP)

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The Lay Image and the Professional Role: An Exploration of Discontinuity in the Process of Anticipatory Socialization

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An issue of some interest in the theories of role socialization and status transition has been the problem of role conflict which arises when there is discontinuity between the expectations associated with the new status and those of the former status.[1] Most traditional perspectives on the issue of role socialization for change in status tend to make the implicit assumption that there is consensus within the society, and particularly among the agents of socialization, as to the legitimate content of the role expectations associated with the anticipated status. Within this context, conflict which arises from the change in status is viewed as the result of the need of the individual to change his expectations to meet the needs of the role he will perform in his new status.

From this point of view, the function of the rites of passage is to facilitate from both a social and legal standpoint the passage of the individual between two potentially discontinuous statuses.[2] Of particular importance in these rites is the liminal or margin phase. In this phase the novice learns the norms, values and expectations which enable him to perform successfully in his new status. After this formal socialization phase, the novice is expected to return to full activity in the society with both the social legitimacy and the knowledge essential to perform his new role.

The studies of the American Soldier during World War II[3] added an important insight to theory related to the process of status transition. As the investigators examined changes in status among the military, it was noted that often those who successfully assumed new statuses began to acquire the necessary behavioral characteristics and role orientations prior to the time of the formalization of the change. The recognition of the process of anticipatory socialization added much to the traditional theories of status transition. Like earlier theories, it assumed that the content of role expectations associated with the anticipated status was generally agreed upon by both the

incumbent and the socializing agents. However, it was assumed that much of the discontinuity resulting from a sudden change in status would disappear. Discontinuity would be lessened because with anticipatory socialization the change would occur gradually and well before the status actually had to be assumed. This approach therefore tended to de-emphasize the importance of the formal rites of passage which earlier theories assumed would aid in the process of status transition.[4]

Theories of status transition which incorporate the idea of anticipatory socialization assume that the incumbent will have an accurate and complete picture of the role expectations associated with the anticipated state.[5] Access to such an image makes it necessary that the incumbent will have some prior contact with the role either through observation of someone who performs it or through second hand sources of information such as parent, a counselor or some literature. What ever the source, the continuity which is implied in this theory is dependent upon the articulation between the expectations developed in anticipation of the status change and the expectations which will be made of the novice once the new status is assumed.

For many of the major roles in society the formal socialization process remains important, at least as a source of public legitimation. For other roles the process of formal education is a necessity because of the kinds of special knowledge which is needed in their performance. For these latter roles, formal education inevitably includes the transmission of certain attitudes and values. One status in this category is the profession. The professions, because of their unique role in the society, tend to have associated with them a well-defined and highly articulated set of values and associated norms. They tend to have a well-defined body of knowledge. And finally, they tend to provide a particular set of rewards for their members. These elements, which define the content of the professional role,

are transmitted through formal socialization in the professional school.[6]

Because of the important function which the professions perform for the society, they generally have a well-defined public image. This public image serves to legitimize the role which the professional performs and it tends to give him power in certain areas of activity. However, the aspects of the professional role which are incorporated in this public or lay image are often based upon those parts of the professional role which are publicly visible in the professional's activity. Often too, the lay image of the professional role tends to incorporate only the most dramatic or romantic components of the professional's activity. This results in a stereo-typed image of what the professions do. Finally, the lay image often reflects the public's impression of those who typically assume the role, and thus it often incorporates ascriptive characteristics associated with some other social category such as "women", or "men".[7]

For whatever reason the public or lay image often fails to fully reflect the components of the role which are the most important within the profession. It is also slow to reflect internal changes which occur in the professional role definition, since these often challenge the popular conception of the role. Anticipatory socialization which is based upon this public image of the profession is often the source of discontinuity of a sort different from that which has been traditionally the concern of theories of status transition. Discontinuity in the present sense arises, not because of the difficulty on the part of the novice in changing to meet role expectations, but precisely because the novice has changed to meet these expectations. He has changed, however, to accomodate a role which he only perceives in part. Thus role conflict in this situation arises not because of a problem of the incumbent but because the social system has failed to provide an accurate image of the role for which anticipatory socialization has occurred.

This discontinuity is quite apparent in the findings of a study of dropouts from a collegiate nursing program which was done by the senior author of this paper.[8] Because of changes in the organization of health care and the treatment of illness, nursing has undergone a drastic change in role definition.[9] As a result, the central values of the traditional nursing role, which emphasized direct care and treatment of the patient, and gave the occupation a pre-eminent place among the "typically feminine" occupations, have been redefined to incorporate in the role the activity of directing others in the provision of this care. Thus the internal definition of the nursing role as transmitted through the professional program of nursing education tends to emphasize the supervision and direction of the activities of auxiliary personnel, the ability to perform highly complex techniques, and the increasing responsibility for the maintenance of written records and the standardization of procedures.[10] The alternative to this bureaucratically oriented role is not the traditional role of direct patient care, but the training of nursing students in a school of nursing. As one study of nursing education notes rather plaintively:

> It is a fact of everyday experience that by and large, the more educated the nurse becomes, the further away from actual patient care she gets. She may, and usually does feel guilty, but she has to choose, and her choice implies the sacrifice of what is found to be less desirable.[11]

This change in role definition has also introduced changes into the reward system. No longer are the major rewards in nursing associated with the giving of good patient care. Since the patient-centered context of nursing is becoming less and less part of the nursing role, the nurses rewards are now associated with what most nurses do. Hence they come primarily for the performance as a good bureaucrat or administrator. They are typically in the form of increased prestige, promotion and greater responsibility, in the administrative heirarchy.[12]

However, the lay or public ideology associated with nursing continues to emphasize the traditional nursing role. In the public image, and even in the ideology of nursing, the welfare of the patient is best served by direct contact with the nurse in a highly personal and nurturant relationship. The nursing role is viewed, in short, as an extension of the mother role and the patient is romantically seen as her helpless child. This view is retained by many practicing nurses outside of the professional schools where the novice is socialized. Thus nursing has been described as possessing a "blurred self-image."[13] One result of this is the presence of an ideology which emphasizes the values of patient contact and service but which actually rewards those who move furthest from this ideal.

The impact of the discontinuity between the public image and the professional definition of the nursing role is quite clear in the data provided by the drop-outs. Among those who dropped out, there was a clear rejection of commitment to a professional role orientation. This rejection was combined with a frustration with the absence of opportunity for self-expression. Moreover, although the importance of nursing course work was recognized, the dropouts felt that the emphasis with which it was presented in this nursing program was not consistent with this image of nursing. Finally, there was a clear indication that those who dropped out had experienced some anticipatory socialization from contact with those performing in medically related occupational roles.

By contrast, the student who did not drop out did not experience anticipatory socialization from others in medically related roles. They tended to be committed to a career as professional nurses and did not feel that nursing education denied them the opportunity for self-expression. Moreover, although they did not place as much importance on nursing course work <u>per se</u> as did

the dropouts, they tended to feel that the presentation of it in the professional school was appropriate to their goals.

It is of further interest to note that among the dropouts twenty assumed the most nurturant role society offers--marriage, nineteen enrolled in non-professionally oriented nursing programs, and an additional twenty-one chose other service oriented occupations such as school teaching, social work, physical therapy or medicine.

The nursing school itself recognizes the impact of anticipatory socialization based on the public image of nursing. When the faculty were questioned concerning the criteria which were used in selecting new students for admission, most rejected such criteria as knowledge of nursing, practical experience and desire to be of service. The criteria most chosen were intelligence, personality, and leadership.

Clearly, those students who dropped out of the professional nursing program experienced conflict between their image of nursing developed through anticipatory socialization and the image of nursing held by the professional nursing school. It is clear too that the professional nursing school recognizes the negative impact of such an image and tends to emphasize criteria which promote articulation between the two images. In large measure discontinuity is the result of the public stereo-type of the nurse and the nursing role. However, it is also a factor of the change which has occurred in the content of the nursing role, change which has failed to reach the level of ideology as reflected in the value system of the larger society.

Dorothy Riddle has recently completed a study of role socialization among teacher interns. The data which resulted from this study point to the existence of the same type of conflict in teacher education. However, her findings provide more concrete evidence of the conditions under which successful anticipatory socialization facilitates the transition from layman to professional.

In her study, Riddle compared teacher interns in terms of their self-evaluation of the clarity with which they viewed their roles as teachers. Her findings indicated that teacher interns who most successfully made the transition from student to teacher arrived in the intern program with the clearest image of the teacher role. Furthermore, this role clarity was the result of an accurate image of the teaching role developed through anticipatory socialization. Although the clarity with which the image of the teaching role was perceived made the process of formal education more meaningful to these interns, they did not need to learn how to behave as teachers. They could thus concentrate on the content which was offered in the program. Riddle's evidence indicated that these students were better able to see the relevance of the course work for their future roles, since the expectations of these roles were clear to them.

The anticipatory socialization experienced by the interns with high role clarity differed from that experienced by both the dropouts from the student nursing program and that experienced by the interns with low role clarity in two respects. First, the teacher interns had used as their role models teachers whom they knew in many contexts both inside and outside the classroom. Thus they were able to develop a realistic image of the teaching role and one which reflected both the public and professional orientations. Second, the high role clarity interns made the decision to become teachers on the basis of criteria intrinsic to the teacher role.

By contrast, the low role clarity interns had no clear image of the teaching role. Their image seemed to reflect the popular stereo-type associated with the public image. Their view of the teacher was restricted largely to the classroom situation. Moreover, the low role clarity interns made the decision to become teachers on the basis of criteria which were largely extrinsic to the teacher role.

The discussion in this paper relates to only one aspect of a more general problem which we find with the theoretical perspectives dealing with role socialization and status transition. The major difficulty associated with these theories lies in their assumption that the social system is stable and that change, when it occurs, is immediately visible to all segments of the system. It is clear that such an assumption is untenable in most complex social systems. Therefore it is surprising to us that despite a tremendous amount of concern with social change in both the fields of Sociology and Education there has been little research which deals with socialization for change. Over a decade ago David Riesman[15] and Alex Inkeles[16] published some tentative findings in this area, but since then little has been done. The problem is, we believe, a pressing one. It relates to problems of urban education, occupational and vocational education and many other areas which touch jointly on the two disciplines.

Footnotes

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[2]Victor W. Turner, "Myth and Symbol," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Volume V, pp. 576-81.

[3]Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., The American Soldier: Adjustment to Army Life, Volume I, Studies in the Social Psychology of World War II (Princeton University Press: Princeton, N. J., 1949).

[4]Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, Rev. Ed. (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1967) pp. 384-385.

[5]Ibid. pp. 336-354.

[6]Bernard Barber, "Some Problems in the Sociology of Professions," Daedalus, 92 (Fall, 1963) pp. 669-688.

[7]Lyle V. Saunders, "The Changing Role of the Nurse," American Journal of Nursing, 54 (1954) p. 1097. Leonard Reissman and John Rohrer (eds.) Change and Dilemma in the Nursing Profession (New York: Putnam, 1957) passim. Robert W. Habenstein and Edwin A. Christ, Professionalizer, Traditionalizer, and Utilizer (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1955) passim. Kenneth D. Benne and Warren Bennis, "Confusion and Conflict in Nursing," American Journal of Nursing, 59 (1959) p. 380. Ida H. Simpson, "Patterns of Socialization in the Professions: The Case of the Student Nurse," (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, 1960) pp. 2-4 and passim. Mimeograph.

[8]Richard B. Warnecke, Dropouts from Collegiate Nursing: A Typological Study of Role Conflict (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, 1966) Unpublished Dissertation.

[9]Esther Lucille Brown, Nursing for the Future (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1948) p. 75. Habenstein and Christ, pp. 1-5, Reissman and Rohrer, p. 91.

[10]Ronald G. Corwin, Marvin J. Taves and Eugene Haas, "Professional Disillusionment," Nursing Research 10 (Summer, 1961) pp. 141-44

[11]Madeline Clemence Vaillot, Commitment to Nursing, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963) p. 202.

[12]Bernard Barber, "Some Problems in the Sociology of Professions."

[13]Benne and Bennis, p. 380.

[14]Dorothy K. Riddle, Intern Teachers' Experienced Anticipatory Socialization, (Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1968) Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.

[15]David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950)

[16]Alex Inkeles, "Social Change and Social Character: The Role of Parental Mediation," The Journal of Social Issues XI (1955) pp. 12-22.